

REDUCING LEAD EXPOSURE FROM DRINKING WATER (INCLUDES LEAD AND COPPER RULE)

Background:

- Since and largely because of the implementation of the Lead and Copper Rule (LCR), promulgated in 1991, the levels of lead in drinking water have decreased significantly. However, there are significant challenges with this regulation and opportunities to improve public health protection.
- Lead enters drinking water mainly from corrosion of plumbing materials containing lead. Where present, lead service lines are the most significant source of lead in drinking water. EPA estimates there are between 6.5 and 10 million lead service lines in the U.S.
- The LCR is one of the most complicated drinking water regulations to implement because the primary source of the contaminant is in the service lines and premise plumbing after drinking water leaves the treatment plant. The LCR requires water systems to conduct tap sampling in homes to assure compliance.
- One effective means of reducing lead exposure is to optimize corrosion control to avoid or limit leaching of lead into drinking water.
- Many drinking water systems have not fully optimized corrosion control treatment, and the LCR does not require small systems to optimize corrosion control unless more than 10% of samples exceed the action level.
- In most communities, lead service lines are partially or entirely privately owned and some homeowners or renters may be unwilling or unable to replace the portion of the line at their home.

Key Points:

- Exposure to lead is known to present serious health risks to the brain and nervous system of children. Children can be exposed to lead from sources such as soil, paint, dust, air, food, and drinking water.
- Recent lead crises in Flint, MI, and other cities like East Chicago, IN, and Newark, NJ, have brought to the forefront the challenges many communities across the country are facing from lead.
- The FY 2019 President's Budget request includes \$863.2 million for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, allowing states to finance high priority infrastructure investments, including the replacement of lead service lines to protect human health.
- The FY 2018 Omnibus appropriation provided \$50 million for three new grant programs under the 2016 Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act. These funds will help public water systems meet Safe Drinking Water Act requirements, provide funding for infrastructure projects that reduce the presence of lead in drinking water, and assist schools and childcare facilities with voluntary lead testing programs.
- Last fall, EPA released an updated drinking water lead testing tool for schools and child care facilities.
- The WIFIA program is inviting 39 projects in 16 states and Washington, D.C. to apply for loans totaling up to \$5 billion to help finance over \$10 billion in water infrastructure investments. 12 projects selected in FY18 involve reducing lead or other contaminants and address aging infrastructure.

Talking Points (high level):

- We are working aggressively to reduce exposure to lead from various sources, including drinking water.
- The Agency is working to address these concerns through the release of the Lead Action Plan.
- Another resource available is through the WIFIA program that plans to leverage over \$10 billion in water infrastructure projects, which can help address lead exposure.

(additional Talking Points on the LCR Rule, Flint, and the IG report on the back)

IG Report:

- We've closely reviewed the findings in the Inspector General's report on Flint and we agree with their recommendations.
 - We've already taken steps to implement the IG's recommendations.
 - In December, EPA and OIG came to agreement on the final corrective action to ensure the agency fully implements the IG's recommendations.

Rulemaking:

- We're currently working hard on revisions to the 1991 Lead and Copper Rule, including reviewing recent input from our state, local, and tribal partners. We are targeting the spring of 2019 to propose an improved Lead and Copper Rule.
- This is a rulemaking the last Administration failed to perform, despite knowing about the improvements needed throughout their entire Administration. This Administration is committed to performing the hard work needed to better protect the health and welfare of our citizens, particularly the developing brains of our greatest asset – our children!
- A key part of our rulemaking will prioritize the use of lead service line inventories along with what we know about lead risks to prioritize replacement of the service lines that pose the greatest risk to the public.

Flint:

- We have provided support to the state of Michigan and the City of Flint to ensure the drinking water system has recovered and that families have safe drinking water.
- The drinking water system in Flint has returned to compliance and we are committed to supporting the city and state to ensure that nothing like the tragedy in Flint ever occurs again.